

**IN CLAIMS:**

1. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method of doing business on a network comprising:

providing a user with access to a first online store through one or more networks and via an on-screen display, the first online store having one or more products, each with a product description and a price, the product description and price being provided to the user via the on-screen display;

receiving one or more selection requests for said one or more products from the user via the on-screen display, wherein one of the products is a selected product;

providing a fixed shopping mode, via the on-screen display, where said user conducts a product purchase transaction for said selected product via the first online store; and

providing a dynamic price shopping mode, via the on-screen display, where the user initiates an auction in real-time for generating bids for the selected product from different online stores, other than the first online store;

wherein the on-screen display allows the user to begin shopping in the fixed shopping mode, then initiate the auction in the dynamic shopping mode, then elect to return to shopping in the fixed shopping mode without being obligated to accept any of the bids provided in the dynamic shopping mode, but having a choice to select any of the bids provided in the dynamic shopping mode.

2. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 1, where the different online stores are provided by a set of pre-registered merchants that agree to provide the bids for the selected product.

3. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 1, where the bids include bid conditions that include any one or more of the following: a selected product price, a

shipping method, a shipping time, a handling method, a product packaging, a set of product delivery instructions, a provision of better deals for bundling two or more products, a recommendation of comparable and/or related products, a provision of customer service programs including express checkout in online stores, wish lists, gift registries, reward programs, discount for certain shopping groups, custom-configurable products, email notification services, services, and products.

4. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 1, where one or more of the different online stores provides an additional bid for an additional product, other than the selected product.

5. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 4, where the additional product includes any one or more of the following: a replacement product, an up-sell product, a cross-sell product, a combination product to be used with the selected product, an alternative product, and a related product.

6. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 1, where one or more of the different stores can re-bid to the user after placing their bids.

7. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 1, where one or more of the selected products is organized in a product ontology.

8. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 7, where the ontology specifies one or more attributes of a service.

9. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 8, where the service includes any one or more of the following: insurance, training, financing, banking, stock

brokerage, real estate sales, car sales, airline tickets, real estate maintenance, professional services, legal services, business management services, medical services, sales, travel, education, entertainment, computer programming, technical design, web page design, home maintenance, repairs, services, and products.

10. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 7, where the ontology specifies one or more attributes of a product.

11. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 10, where the attributes include any one or more of the following: a product name, a product manufacturer, a product model number, one or more product identification numbers including a product UPC (Universal Product Code), a product SKU (Stock Keeping Unit) number, or ISBN in case of books, one or more categories the product belongs to, one or more components of the product and their value, one or more accessories of the product, and one or more product features.

12. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 8, where the bid conditions are presented to the user arranged in an order according to one or more of the attributes.

13. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 1, where the auction can be any one or more of the following: a standard auction, a parcel bidding, a Dutch auction, a reverse auction, an express auction, a private auction, and a bartering.

14. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 1, where one or more of the bids are arranged in an order.

15. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 14, where the order includes any one or more of the following: one or more of the product attributes, a customer satisfaction rating, a price, a delivery, a handling option, a shipping time and cost, and existence of one or more customer programs including express checkout in online stores, wish lists, gift registries, reward programs, discount for certain shopping groups, custom-configurable products, and email notification services.
16. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 1, where one or more of the products is a complex product comprising more than one component.
17. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 16, where the more than one component is provided by at least two of the different online stores in a joint bid.
18. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 1, where one or more of the products includes one or more of the following: a set of one or more of the other products and a service.
19. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 1, where personal information about the user is not disclosed to the different online stores when the user initiates the auction.
20. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 1, wherein:  
the first online store and the different online stores have been identified and preselected by the user.
21. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 1, wherein:  
the bids conform to bid conditions.

22. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 1, wherein:  
when the bids are generated, the user has the further choice to select one or more of the bids, and initiate another round of bids from one or more of the different online stores that provided the selected one or more bids.
23. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method, as in claim 1, wherein:  
a starting price for the bids is a price set by the first online store for the selected product.
24. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method for enabling a user to purchase products on a computer network, comprising:  
receiving requests for web pages from a web browser running at a user's computer;  
obtaining the web pages and providing them to the web browser;  
monitoring the obtained web pages to determine whether they include a product page that describes a product offered by a first online store;  
when the monitoring determines that the web pages include the product page, parsing the product page to obtain information regarding the product;  
preparing a bid request using the obtained information;  
wherein a selectable icon is displayed on the web browser such that the user has a choice to select the selectable icon to begin a bid process, or to continue shopping at the first on-line store via the product page;  
responsive to the user selecting the icon, beginning a bid process for the product by submitting the bid request to different online stores, other than the first online store;  
receiving bids from the different online stores for the product, responsive to the bid request;  
preparing a bid list from the received bids;  
wherein the bid list lists information regarding the bids from the different online stores;

providing the bid list to the web browser for display thereon;

wherein, upon display of the bid list, the user has a choice to select one of the bids in the bid list to communicate with the online store that made the selected bid to purchase the product or a comparable product, or to continue shopping at the first on-line store via the product page.

25. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 24, wherein:

upon display of the bid list, the user has the further choice to select one or more of the bids, and initiate another round of bids from one or more of the different online stores that provided the selected one or more bids.

26. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 24, wherein:

the bid request submitted to the different online stores includes a price of the product obtained from the product page.

27. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 24, wherein:

the selectable icon is displayed with the product page on the web browser.

28. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 24, wherein:

the bid list is displayed with the product page on the web browser.

29. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 24, wherein:

the information obtained regarding the product offered by the first online store includes a name, price and attributes.

30. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 24, wherein:

the first online store and the different online stores are preferred online stores.

31. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 24, wherein:  
the bid process comprises an auction in real-time.
32. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method for enabling a user to purchase products on a computer network, comprising:  
providing requests for web pages from a web browser running at a user's computer to an Internet Service Provider (ISP); wherein:  
the ISP obtains the web pages and provides them to the web browser;  
a bid agent monitors the obtained web pages to determine whether they include a product page that describes a product offered by a first online store;  
when the bid agent determines that the web pages include the product page, the bid agent parses the product page to obtain information regarding the product, and prepares a bid request using the obtained information;  
displaying a selectable icon on the web browser such that the user has a choice to select the selectable icon to begin a bid process or to continue shopping at the first on-line store via the product page;  
responsive to the user selecting the icon, communicating with the bid agent to begin the bid process for the product in which the bid request is submitted to different online stores, other than the first online store;  
wherein the bid agent communicates with a bid broker that receives bids from the different online stores for the product, responsive to the bid request;  
the bid broker prepares a bid list listing information from the received bids; and  
receiving the bid list and displaying the bid list on the web browser;  
wherein, upon display of the bid list, the user has a choice to select one of the bids in the bid list to communicate with the online store that made the selected bid to purchase the product or a comparable product, or to continue shopping at the first on-line store via the product page.

33. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 32, wherein:  
upon display of the bid list, the user has the further choice to select one of the bids in the bid list, and send a request for another round of bids to the different online stores.
34. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 32, further comprising:  
displaying the selectable icon with the product page on the web browser.
35. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 32, further comprising:  
displaying the bid list with the product page on the web browser.